



# HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana  
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## IM Weekly Highlights



- The IM Building Interoperability: A Progress Report document has been posted to this link: [http://interop.mt.gov/content/docs/Outreach\\_and\\_Education/IM\\_Build-Out\\_Report\\_2009\\_12.pdf](http://interop.mt.gov/content/docs/Outreach_and_Education/IM_Build-Out_Report_2009_12.pdf). Printed versions will be distributed next week.
- The year 2009 was the most successful construction and installation year since the IM took its present form in 2005. Here are some of the major milestones:
  - Acceptance of the entire Motorola system on the Northern Tier Project from Lincoln County to Sheridan County.
  - Acceptance of towers and equipment linking the Northern Tier with the Lewis & Clark County system.
  - Acceptance of the Northern Tier's western portion from MacDonald Pass through Powell, Granite, Missoula, Lake, Flathead and Lincoln Counties.
  - Completion of the U.S. Air Force radio project in Pondera, Teton, Cascade, and Fergus Counties (Central MT Consortium) and Wheatland County (Big Sky 11).
  - Completion of the Bull Mountain site and new tower near Whitehall.
  - Completion of concrete pours for tower and shelter foundations at most sites in Beaverhead and Madison Counties.

## New Faces at PSSB, DES

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

Julia Lester has recently joined the Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB), having moved from the Information Technology Service Division (ITSD) network development and design area. She has 20 years experience working with network design for worldwide network transport systems. Carl Hotvedt, PSSB Bureau Chief, explained that Julia's transfer into the department allows PSSB to leverage her experience and knowledge of



design, implementation and operation of large corporate and government networks as PSSB moves into new projects, including Internet Protocol (IP) based radio capabilities and Next Generation 9-1-1.

Traditional 9-1-1 systems were created to transmit voice media only and were not designed to handle text, data, images, and video multi-media that are increasingly common in today's wireless, mobile society. HAM readers may recall that Montana's 9-1-1 Program received a US Dept. of Transportation grant for the implementation and operation of Phase II Enhanced 9-1-1 services and for migration to an Internet-Protocol (IP) based emergency network. Julia will be directly involved in this effort, along with other PSSB responsibilities.

"Statewide radio grant guidance directs PSSB to consider emerging technologies such as broadband, wireless data networks, and IP-based mobile communications to meet interoperable and future communications challenges. Julia will provide considerable expertise in this area," said Hotvedt.

Julia enjoys camping and exploring Montana. She is the mother of four boys.

Meanwhile, another Julia, Julia Fenwick, has been named the Grants Program Manager at Montana's Disaster and Emergency Services (DES). This Julia comes from an entrepreneurial background, having managed an insurance company in a nine-state region, giving her considerable background in compliance and application details. These skills will be useful in managing the grant application process, distributing funds, and monitoring grant compliance.



Julia takes a customer-focused approach to her work. She believes that one of the challenges of the job is the fact that Homeland Security grants have to be tailored to meet unique needs of individual communities. By the same token, she believes that what makes the program so successful is the fact that grants are designed to help local jurisdictions. She is enthusiastic about her new position, and welcomes the diversity and the opportunity to help other. Julia has three sons and takes an active role in their college and high school sports activities.

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### PSSB Performing Frequency Audits

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

The Public Safety Services Bureau is conducting an internal audit of state-held Federal Communication Commission (FCC) licenses as part of an effort to accurately assess frequency use and compliance. Frequency licenses held by the State of Montana are used for a variety of purposes and include low-band, VHF, UHF, 700 MHz, 900 MHz and higher frequency microwave licenses.

The audit is being performed for several reasons. First, because a limited amount of frequency spectrum is available, responsible management is necessary to reduce potential for interference and ensure that frequency resources are available for essential uses. Secondly, many of the frequencies held by the State of Montana will be subject to narrow-band requirements over the next several years. Planning and budgeting to transition these resources must be undertaken.

"Frequency licenses are a very valuable commodity, and it is PSSB's legislated responsibility to make sure these are utilized and managed in a proper manner," said Communications Technology Manager Scott Bradford. "The common mutual aid frequencies are in good shape. Other licenses held by the state have a number of unknowns. Some licenses have been held so long that their use has changed or it is difficult to determine who is actually using them now. In a few cases, the frequencies are no longer being used. We hope the review of licenses will clarify all these issues and allow us to maintain regulatory compliance."

PSSB's intends to complete this work in January and is developing long-range plans to more effectively manage these frequencies, working closely with state, local and tribal agencies to make the most efficient use of these resources in the future. Questions regarding this work may be directed to Scott Bradford at [sbradford@mt.gov](mailto:sbradford@mt.gov).

### Upcoming Meetings

- **Mon., Jan. 11**  
IM Finance Committee (IMFC)  
Helena • 9:00 am - noon  
Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.
- **Mon., Jan. 11**  
IM Governance Committee (IMGC)  
Helena • 1:00 - 5:00 pm  
Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.
- **Tues., Jan. 12**  
IM Project Directors (IMPD)  
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm  
State Capitol, Room 152

- **Wed., Jan. 13**  
IM Governmental Affairs Sub-Committee  
Helena • 9:00 am - noon  
MACo Large Conference Rm., Lower Level  
2715 Skyway Drive
- **Wed., Jan. 13**  
South Central Consortium (SCMIC)  
Livingston • 10:00 am - noon  
City County Complex West Room, 414 E. Callender St.
- **Wed., Jan. 13**  
Central Consortium  
Great Falls • 10:00 am - noon  
DES Offices (Vince Kolar's), 521 1st Ave NW.
- **Thurs., Jan. 14**  
IM Audit Committee  
Helena • 9:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.
- **Thurs., Jan. 21**  
I-15/90 Corridor Consortium  
Butte • 10:00 am - noon  
Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George Street
- **Mon., Jan. 25**  
IM Technical Committee (IMTC)  
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm  
MACo Large Conference Rm., Lower Level  
2715 Skyway Drive
- **Tues., Jan. 26**  
State Agency Radio Users Task Force  
Helena • 9:00 am - 11:00 pm  
Mitchell Building, 125 N. Roberts, Room 160
- **Wed., Jan. 27**  
Statewide Interoperable Executive Council (SIEC)  
Helena • 10:00 am - 3:00 pm  
State Capitol, Room 152
- **Wed., Jan. 27**  
Eastern Tier Consortium  
Glendive • 10:00 am - noon  
Location to be Announced
- **Thurs., Jan. 27**  
Big Sky 11 Consortium  
Billings • 10:00 am - noon  
Location to be Announced
- **Tues., Feb. 2**  
Outreach Presentation • White Sulphur Springs  
Time & Location to be Announced
- **Thurs., Feb. 4**  
Outreach Presentation • Chippewa-Cree Tribal Council  
Rocky Boy's Reservation  
Time & Location to be Announced
- **Thurs., Feb. 4**  
Mobile Data Terminal Consortium  
Helena • 10:00 am - Noon  
Law Enforcement Center, 221 Breckenridge  
Downstairs Conference Room

*Happy New Year!*

